DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 556 CS 510 478

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TITLE Evidence and Ethics in Individual Events: An Examination of an AFA-NIET Final Round.
PUB DATE 2000-11-00
NOTE 32p.; An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (86th, Seattle, WA, November 9-12, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Citations (References); Communication Research; *Debate; Debate Format; *Ethics; Higher Education; Plagiarism; *Public Speaking; *Speech Communication .
IDENTIFIERS American Forensic Association; *Evidence

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the use of source citations and evidence in the final round of Informative Speaking at the 1998 American Forensic Association-National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET). The "AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities" was the framework for the analysis. Videotapes of the six final-round contestants' speeches in the category of Informative Speaking were reviewed for their use of evidence. Numerous discrepancies were found between the sources/evidence stated in the speeches and the actual sources. The study organized the ethical concerns around the three primary evidence violations of the AFA: fabricated evidence, distorted evidence, and plagiarism. Results indicate that all six final-round speakers contained evidentiary problems within their presentations. The study highlights 18 instances of fabricated evidence, and 10 instances of distorted evidence, and examines multiple acts of plagiarism committed in one speech. All six speakers violated the AFA code in one manner or another. The study offers recommendations for students, coaches, and judges to avoid such results in the future. Contains 12 tables, 8 endnotes and 36 references. (SR)

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ED 447 556

Evidence and Ethics in Individual Events: An Examination of an AFA-NIET Final Round

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An earlier version of this paper was presented at the November 2000 convention of the National Communication Association, Seattle, Washington.

Running Head: Evidence and Ethics

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ABSTRACT

We investigate the use of source citations and evidence in the final round of Informative Speaking at the 1998 American Forensic Association—National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET). We use the *AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities* as the framework for our analysis. We focus on the issues of fabricated evidence, distorted evidence, and plagiarism. Our results indicate all six final-round speakers contained evidentiary problems within their presentations. We offer suggestions how students, coaches, and judges might participate to avoid such results in the future.

EVIDENCE AND ETHICS IN INDIVIDUAL EVENTS
An Examination Of An AFA-NIET Final Round

INTRODUCTION

People in forensics often hear and use the phrase, "forensics is the laboratory for the public speaking classroom."[1] Forensics is where we put into practice the principles of communication we teach in public speaking and oral interpretation courses. Numerous public speaking textbooks contain example speeches which were first developed and delivered in intercollegiate forensic competitions. Videotapes of final rounds are often presented as examples of persuasive, informative, and extemporaneous speaking. A similar situation involving a final round tape from the AFA-NIET led to our research project.

Our project began as a simple classroom exercise. Students in a routine public speaking class were shown videotapes of the six final round contestants in Informative Speaking. The students were asked to review the speeches for numerous qualities: primary organization, internal organization, transitions, introductions, conclusions, and evidence. The students' final assessment focused on the inclusion of evidence in public speech.

We have found the activity highly worthwhile as a form of "reverse engineering." Students research abilities are significantly expanded by tracking down sources from the speeches, the forms and types of sources increases, and the means for including evidence is enhanced. The classroom project on this occasion took an unexpected turn—the students started identifying numerous discrepancies between the sources/evidence stated in the speeches and the actual sources. The students provided permission to Cronn–Mills and Schnoor to use their efforts as the basis for this reseach effort

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of evidence in public address events—while a necessary component of the activity—has received little scholarly scrutiny. Friedley (1983) noted more than 16 years ago "[w]hile debate educators have been willing to undertake such study over the years, individual [r]esearch in this area has been extremely limited" (p. 116-117). The dearth of scholarship [d]ealing evidence and individual events continues to this day. Few articles in our forensic journals directly address the use of evidence in public address events.

Forensic scholars believe ethics is a serious issue for the activity and the discipline. Thomas and Hart (1982) distributed a questionnaire at the AFA-NIET focusing on the issue of ethics. The findings indicate 85 percent of competitors and nearly 80 percent of judges believe fabricating evidence constitutes the worst ethical violation in the activity.

Friedley (1983) points out the forensic community has taken steps to address the ethical use of sources and evidence. According to Friedley, the Sedalia National Development Conference on Forensics forwarded two resolutions involving ethics and evidence:

- Forensics should promote adherence to the ethical and scholarly obligation of the advocate, including respect for the integrity of evidence, accurate representation of the ideas of others, and rigorous examination of beliefs. (p. 111)
- Evidence should be evaluated not by its quantity, but by its quality determined in part by its credibility and audience acceptability. Thoroughness and care must be exercised in finding, recording, and documenting evidence. Advocates should recognize their ultimate responsibility for all evidence they use, whether discovered by them or by others. (p. 111)

Two studies specifically analyzed the use of sources and evidence in individual events. The most comprehensive and revealing article was authored by Robert L. Frank and appeared in the fall 1983 issue of the *National Forensic Journal*. Frank specifically studied the evidence used by the six finalists in persuasive speaking at the 1981 National Forensic Association tournament. Frank's investigation revealed all six speakers engaged in the systematic abuse of evidence. Frank notes "a comparison of the claims made by the speakers with original source documentation reveals a pattern of fabrication, distortion and deception of disturbing proportions"(p. 97).

Frank determined the six students engaged in three primary forms of evidence abuse: fabrication of evidence, source deception, and plagiarism. The fabrication of evidence includes attributing data to "a wholly non-existent source" or attributing the information to an extant source yet does not contain the data stated in the speech (p. 97). Four of the six speakers in Frank's study engaged in the fabrication of evidence.

Source deception is the second primary problem Frank (1983) identifies. Source deception is when tactics are "used to deceive the listener as to the true source of evidence" p. 97). Frank distinguishes between two forms of source deception: undisclosed sources and pseudo-citations. Undisclosed sources are major sources of information which are not revealed to the audience. Frank states three students relied extensively on sources never stated in their speeches, and five of six used at least one major undisclosed source. Pseudo-citations are the second form of source deception. A pseudo-citation is when a secondary source is included within a primary source, yet the secondary source is identified as a primary source within the speech. Frank states nearly one-fourth of all the evidence used by the six final round speakers

consisted of pseudo-citations. The final form of source deception is source splitting. Source splitting is when a student "divides the details that identify the source into two parts" by attributing "one fact in one part of the speech to one part of the source and later attribut[ing] another act the second part" (Frank, 1983, p. 103). Frank notes only one of the six finalists engaged in source splitting.

Plagiarism is the final form of evidence abuse identified by Frank (1983). Frank's analysis indicates one of the six finalists plagiarized his speech. The plagiarism by the student was extensive. Frank determined 43 of 92 lines in the speech "consist of whole phrases, sentences, and paragraphs lifted word for word from a single unattributed source" (Frank, 1983, p. 103).

The second study to examine the ethical use of sources and evidence was a master's thesis written by Robert L. Markstrom (1994) titled: *A Case Study of Source Citations Found in the 1993 AFA-NIET Final Round of Extemporaneous Speaking*. Markstrom's results indicate students "often made mistakes within the citations" and "frequently misrepresented the content of the sources they cited" (p. 23). Markstrom used a broad standard to determine if the content of a source was appropriately represented. The standard stated: "the general thesis of the speech had to match the general topic nature of the source" (p. 25). Yet, even with such a broad standard, Markstrom notes only 44 percent met the criteria (66% failure rate). Markstrom argues speakers were clearly misrepresenting the evidence used in extemporaneous speeches.

Finally, the American Forensic Association has established clear ethical standards concerning the use of evidence in forensic competition.

AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities

The AFA code of ethics identifies three primary violations concerning evidence usage—fabricated evidence, distorted evidence and, plagiarism. (The AFA code was adopted in 1982 and revised in 1998.)[2] We have replicated below the relevant part of the AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities:

"ARTICLE II: COMPETITOR PRACTICES

1.Forensics competitors shall not use fabricated or distorted evidence.

A. Evidence is defined as factual material (statistics and examples) and/or opinion testimony offered as proof of a debater's or a speaker's contention, claim, position, argument, point or case.

B. Fabrication of evidence refers to falsely representing a cited fact or statement of opinion as evidence when the material in question is not authentic. Fabricated evidence is so defined without reference to whether or not the debater or speaker using it was the person responsible for fabricating it.

C. Distorted evidence refers to misrepresenting the actual or implied content of factual or opinion evidence. Distorted evidence is so defined without reference to whether or not the debater or speaker using it was the person responsible for distorting it. Distortions shall be judged by comparing the challenged evidence against the material as it appears in the original source. Distortions include, but are not limited to:

i. quoting out of context

ii. misinterpreting the evidence so as to alter its meaning.

iii. omitting salient information from quotations or paraphrases. MLA Standards will be considered advisory with respect to this standard.

iv. adding words to a quotation which were not present in the original source of the evidence without identifying such an addition.

v. failure to provide complete documentation of the evidence (name of author(s), source of publication, full date, page numbers and author(s) credentials where available in the original) when challenged. Debaters and speakers are expected to be in possession of the forms of documentation listed here at the time they used any evidence which was challenged.

vi. Failure to provide complete documentation of electronically retrieved evidence, including:

a. Name of author(s), source of information, full date, and author(s) credentials where available;

b. The nature and type of the electronic site identified in the evidence citation [e.g., "listserve," "Lexis/Nexis," "Homepage," "CD-ROM"];

c. A full current Universal Resource Locator (URL) when applicable [e.g., http://www.epa.gov]; (iv) The date the information was retrieved [date of access]; (v) Unique and original page numbers where available, or an indication if not available [e.g., "n.pag.," "p. Lexis"].

2. In individual events which involve original student speech compositions (oratory/persuasion, informative/expository, after-dinner/epideictic, rhetorical criticism, impromptu, extemporaneous or other similar speaking contests), the speaker shall not commit plagiarism.

A. Plagiarism is defined as claiming another's written or spoken word as one's own, or claiming as one's own a significant portion of the creative work of another.

B. A speech in individual events competition is considered plagiarized when the student presenting it was not the principal person responsible for researching, drafting, organizing, composing, refining and generally constructing the speech in question" (the AFA code is available online at: http://www.americanforensics.org/afacode.html).

DATA COLLECTION

The students involved in the data collection process were instructed to write down the source cites and evidence the speakers claimed was derived from each source.[3] Second, the students attempted to track down the sources and determine the veracity of the evidence. The sources stated in the six speeches were tracked to the original documentation, including tracking down personal interviewees. The students were able to track down approximately 60 percent of the sources, another 30 percent were located by Cronn–Mills and Schnoor, and 10 percent were not verifiable.

Our data collection of the sources, as noted above, is not exhaustive. We were unable to locate or verify certain sources cited in the speeches. The verification problem stems from three issues: use of internet sites, use of television broadcasts, and use of international newspapers. Internet sites are problematic due to their potentially fleeting existence. An internet site can be "up" one day and "down" the next day. Certain internet sites are also by subscription only (e.g., *Ivanhoe Medical Breakthroughs*). The prohibitive cost of subscribing to the site negated verification of the source/evidence. The second verification problem results from television broadcasts. Television broadcasts were used by numerous students. The transient nature of

broadcasts make verification difficult. Lexus/Nexus does contain transcripts of some broadcasts—but not all (e.g., *The Leeza Show*, *CNN Morning News*). The final verification issue deals with international newspapers. Many university and college libraries subscribe to major international newspapers, but the more regional newspapers are far more difficult to verify. Interlibrary loan (ILL) is of little use in such instances since source citations in competitive speeches do not contain information necessary to request materials through ILL (e.g., author, article title, page numbers).

RESULTS

The six speakers were quite proficient with their inclusion of evidence. The six students averaged 13.3 pieces of evidence in their presentations.[4] The average of 13.3 sources computes to a source citation spoken approximately every 45 seconds.[5] Two of the students far exceeded the average using 16 pieces of evidence (cite every approximately 37 seconds) and 17 pieces of evidence (cite every approximately 35 seconds). Two of the students set the minimum with 11 pieces of evidence in their speeches (cite approximately every 54 seconds).

We have organized the ethical concerns around the three primary evidence violations of the AFA: fabricated evidence, distorted evidence and, plagiarism. The use of the AFA code (1982/1998) is particularly appropriate. The six speakers involved in this study were all part of the 1998 final round in Informative Speaking at the American Forensic Association—National Individual Events Tournament. The speakers are, as part of the AFA-NIET, responsible for upholding the AFA code of ethics (1982/1998). We have grouped the results by speaker within each ethical violation. We have included only the sources/evidence which we believe violated the AFA code of ethics. We have not included: (1) sources/evidence which were verified

accurate; (2) sources/evidence which we were unable to locate; or (3) sources in which the only issue was a "mis-speak" by the student resulting in the transposition of dates or titles.[6] Statements in brackets indicate analytical comments of the evidence and its the relationship to the AFA code.

Fabricated Evidence

According to the AFA code, fabricated evidence "falsely represent[s] a cited fact or statement of opinion as evidence when the material in question is not authentic" (AFA Code, 1982/1998). We counted as fabricated any evidence not apparent in the cited source. On certain occasions we reclassified evidence initially thought as fabricated to the categories of either distorted or plagiarized evidence. The reclassification occurred when we found the stated evidence in another source or under a different date of the stated source. We highlight 18 instances of fabricated evidence. Five final round speeches contained instances of distorted evidence.

Table 1: Fabricated Evidence—Artificial Muscles

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
New Scientist December 6, 1997	" . . . an be made in any shape or ize . . . ."	Evidence not apparent in article.
Pacific Affairs Sept. 23, 1997	" . . . artificial muscles function like a regular party favor."	*Pacific Affairs* published issues in Summer '97 and Fall '97; the evidence was not apparent in either issue; *Pacific Affairs* addresses only matters pertinent to the Pacific rim region of the world.

Table 2: Fabricated Evidence—Danger Model

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
National Institute of Health August 1997	"The danger model will protect millions of infants from the cold, flu, and measles."	According to Polly Matzinger of the NIH (personal communication, December 21, 1999), "I'm not sure which paper she is quoting here. It is true that the Danger Model has the potential to save a lot of infants, but I certainly never said that it that way."
Lancet July 5, 1997	" . . . Danger Model is revolutionizing cancer therapy allowing organ transplant recipients to lead a normal life."	Evidence not apparent in article.
Lancet July 5, 1997	" . . . first infant-related vaccine . . . ."	Evidence not apparent in article..
Lancet November 20, 1997	"The tumor is a healthy tissue growing too quickly and the healthy exterior tricks the immune system into not fighting until it is too late."	*Lancet* did not publish an issue dated November 20, 1997. The November 22, 1997, issue does contain an article on immunology, but does not contain the evidence cited in speech. *Lancet* of July 5, 1997, contains the statement, "A tumor isn't attacked because it is healthy, growing tissue."
Science March 13, 1996	" . . . article on the Danger Model . . . ."	*Science* did not publish an issue on March 13, 1996. Issues were published March 8 and March 15, 1996. We did not locate an article on the Danger Model in either the March 8 or March 15, 1996 issues.

Table 3: Fabricated Evidence—Bee Venom Treatment

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
American Journal of Rheumatology December 17, 1997	"97 percent of rheumatoid nodules react positively to bee venom."	*American Journal of Rheumatology* does not exist. We found *Journal of Rheumatology, British Journal of Rheumatology, Scandinaviona Journal of Rheumatology, American College of Rheumatology, Journal of Clinical Rheumatology, Current Opinion in Rheumatology*. Evidence not apparent in any of the journals listed above.
Biochemistry April 1, 1997	"Melatin is 100 times more potent than hydrocortizone."	Evidence not apparent in article.
Washington Post January 18, 1998	"according to BVT advocate Pat Wagner, medicine gives adrenal glands the day off . . . BVT wakes them up again."	Evidence not apparent in cited source.
American Journal of Rheumatology April 8, 1997	"German study of 284 people with varied rheumatic diseases; 1 to 2 days needed to alleviate major symptoms; 70 percent showed marked improvements."	*American Journal of Rheumatology* does not exist. We found *Journal of Rheumatology, British Journal of Rheumatology, Scandinaviona Journal of Rheumatology, American College of Rheumatology, Journal of Clinical Rheumatology, Current Opinion in Rheumatology*. Evidence not apparent in any of the journals listed above.
Medical Industry Today July 18, 1997	"Approximately 2 percent of the world is hypersensitive to insect stings."	Evidence not apparent in source. According to Natalie Franceschi, customer care manager for MIT (personal communication, Dec. 27, 1999), "after searching our site for "insect stings," I cannot locate a reference in the articles or any others to the phrase/sentence you

		quoted." [Franceschi provided a list of all the articles from the July 18, 1997, issue of *Medical Industry Today*. List is available upon request from Cronn–Mills & Schnoor.]

Table 4: Fabricated Evidence—Vomeronasal Organ

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
Boston Globe February 13, 1999	"reports the use of vomeronasal pheromone in treating psychological disorders such as schizophrenia."	Article not published by date of NIET in April 1998.
Chemistry and Industry August 18, 1997	"Dr. Van Toller reports that the way the VNO converts pheromones into electrical impulses is being seriously studied in humans."	Evidence not apparent in article.
Newsweek March 15, 1997	"They [scientists] studied the VNO in other animals—to moths, to monkeys, to rats—but ignored it in humans"	*Newsweek* did not publish a March 15, 1997, issue. Article on VNO appears in issue published *Newsweek*, October 13, 1997. Evidence is not apparent in article.

Table 5: Fabricated Evidence—Edible Plastics

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
Washington Post July 23, 1997	" . . . explains it is protecting the environment through advances in edible packaging, allowing the elderly to take their pills without swallowing and kids from choking on	According to Jensen (1999), the student mis-stated the source; the correct source is the *Washington Post*, July 26, 1997; the evidence is not apparent in either the July 23 or July 26 issues.

	plastic toys."	
Chicago Tribune October 21, 1997	"Scientists have discovered when edible plastic is bonded to one side of a glass it is nearly shatterproof."	Evidence not apparent in article.
Christine Meyer, spokesperson for UNICEF Telephone Interview, March 26, 1998	"Looking into edible plastic for all humanitarian food packaging."	According to UNICEF (personal communication, Dec. 27, 1999), "the person you are looking for is not listed in the UNICEF directory."

Distorted Evidence

According to the AFA code, distorted evidence "refers to misrepresenting the actual or implied content of factual or opinion evidence" (AFA Code, 1982/1998). We illuminate 10 instances of distorted evidence. All six final round speeches contained at least one instance of distorted evidence. The maximum number of ethical violations was three instances of distorted evidence in the speech on the vomeronasal organ (VNO).

Table 6: Distorted Evidence—Artificial Muscles

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
London Daily Telegraph April 26, 1997	" . . . real alternative to heart transplants"	"Doctors have already said that they can use artificial muscle for heart surgery" [surgery ≠ transplant]
Technology Review October 1997	"Artificial sphincters are being developed by doctors"	"Meanwhile, companies are considering the use of polymers as artificial sphincters to treat incontinence" [companies ≠ doctors; "considering the use of" ≠ "being developed"]

Table 7: Distorted Evidence—Danger Model

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
London Daily Telegraph April 15, 1997	"Danger model is the most far reaching advance in immunology this century"	We were unable to find the cited evidence in the April 15, 1997, *London Daily Telegraph*. We did find the following in the April 13, 1997, *London Sunday Telegraph*: " . . It's rather pleasing that it's taken an ex-Playboy bunny to come up with what is potentially the most far-reaching development in immunology this century." [Note the removal of "potentially" from the stated evidence. The removal dramatically changes the tone of the evidence from a possibility to a fact.]

Table 8: Distorted Evidence—Bee Venom Treatment

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
Washington Post June 17, 1997	[Student uses source in speech, yet ignores evidence contrary to thesis.]	Speech ignores criticism of been venom therapy. Headline of June 17, 1997, *Washington Post* reads "Bee Venom Gets Test Against Multiple Sclerosis; Some say Georgetown's Proposed Study of This Unorthodox Therapy is Poorly Designed." Evidence appears to be taken out of context of the article.

Table 9: Distorted Evidence—HEV Vehicles

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
Washington Post May 13, 1997	"Even the most well-designed electric cars can only go 50-70 miles before it needs	First statement is inaccurate. Article states "most cars" not "most well-designed electric cars."

	recharging. Recharging process takes 8-9 hours to complete."	Second statement is not supported by article.
St. Louis Dispatch April 11, 1997	"GM's cheapest electrical car, a two-seater, sells for $35,000."	Evidence is inaccurate. The source states vehicle costs $34,000.

Table 10: Distorted Evidence—Vomeronasal Organ (VNO)

Source Student Cited	Student Said ...	Information in Article
LA Times March 12, 1998	"How the VNO and pheromones work together to send messages to brain on own neural pathways directly to the hypothalamus which sends messages to glands which secretes hormones and other pheromones"	Speaker did not fully represent the article. Statement on VNO and pheromones is accurate, yet the article continues by stating many experts believe the VNO has no function or may not be the only tissue sensitive to pheromones.
Chemistry and Industry August 18, 1997	"Dr. Van Toller states that 'if what has been found out about the VNO is accurate and we think it is, then these molecules hold a lot of potential"	Article states, "Van Toller adds, 'the jury's still out on the human VNO, but if what's being said is true, then these molecules have a lot of potential.'" [Van Toller does not say "we think it (data) is ([accurate).]

Table 11: Distorted Evidence—Edible Plastics

Source Cited by Student	Student Said ...	Researchers' Findings
London Daily Telegraph June 12, 1997	"The collective scientific minds of NASA and Dupont could never perfect"	"Dupont has shown interest." [Article does not mention "collective scientific minds," NASA, or inability to perfect substance.]
Chicago Tribune October 21, 1997	"By using edible plastic to cover pills . . . "	Closest phrase in article states "That was enough to intrigue Richard Fuisz,

	president of Fuisz Technologies Ltd., a Chantilly, VA, company that makes coatings for medicines."

Plagiarism

According to the AFA code, "plagiarism is defined as claiming another's written or spoken word as one's own, or claiming as one's own a significant portion of the creative work of another" (AFA Code, 1982/1998). We have determined one student committed multiple acts of plagiarism. The student appears to have lifted significant portions of her speech from the *Washington Post*, July 26, 1997, article "From Weird Science to Business Alliance; Va. Students' Lab Explosion Leads to Deal for 'Edible Plastic.'" The student never cites the July 26, 1997, *Washington Post* article in her speech, but does miscite the July 23rd *Washington Post* in one instance in another reference. The table below lists statements made by the student on the left and passages from the *Washington Post* article on the right.

Table 12: Plagiarism —Edible Plastic

Statements made by Student	Passages from Washington Post , July 26, 1997
"It all started with green slime."	"It all started with a little slime."
"As Justin White told the *CNN Morning News* of April 23, 1997, the flask of green slime was boiling over and I thought it was going to blow. The bright green gunk spewed all over the place, sending legions of freshmen fleeing for cover."	"The bright green gunk spewed all over the place, sending legions of startled freshmen fleeing for cover." (We were unable to verify the CNN cite.)
"These properties made the boys overnight media sensations. Including an appearance on *Good Morning America* and several marriage	"so, what is this thing that has brought the boys marriage proposals and appearances on CNN and ABC's '*Good Morning America*'?"

proposals." (no cite provided in speech).	
"*J & G's Edible Plastic* homepage, last updated May 19, 1997, gives up its composition. The plastic is a clear, transparent protein that looks a lot like Saran Wrap, except it's thicker and it's edible."	"It's a strong, transparent protein film that looks like a lot like Saran Wrap, except it's a little thicker and it's edible." (We were unable to verify *J & G's Edible Plastic* homepage.)
"The *New Scientist* of June 14, 1997, explains that the plastic bonds to glass, paper, and wood, and dissolves in saliva, but not in water. It even passed the microwave and oven test——the plastic doesn't begin to decompose unit the temperature reaches 350 degrees Celsuis."	"It bonds to glass, paper and wood, and it dissolves in saliva but not in water. It passed the microwave and oven test—the plastic doesn't decompose until it hits 350 degrees Celsius." ("The *New Scientist* of June 14, 1997, does not contain the stated evidence.)
"One place the slime landed was in a small dish in the back of the room. The next day, when they were cleaning up, they realized the residue had combined with other chemicals and looked like plastic."	"It did explode, and they spend the rest of the afternoon mopping up a bucket's worth of the slime. They managed to salvage enough for their teacher's door, but otherwise figured their chemist days were over. But the following day Hash saw that some of the slime had landed in a small dish in the rear of the fume hood. The dish, which was forgotten after an earlier class experiment, contained a certain residue that combined with the slime and formed the plastic."

The preponderance of evidence clearly indicates extensive plagiarism occurred in the speech. While we were unable to verify two of the citations provided by the student, the almost identical language strongly indicates the statements are plagiarized from the *Washington Post* article. The two unidentifiable sources, as we note in the Data Collection section, are difficult to

impossible to verify. One of the sources is a CNN broadcast and the second is a personal webpage.

DISCUSSION

Our results are distressing. Students in the final round of Informative Speaking at the AFA–NIET should represent among the best the activity has to offer—on both competitive and educational levels. Yet, the fact all six speakers appear to have violated the AFA code (1982/1998) in one manner or another clearly indicates a systemic issue within intercollegiate individual events competition. We sincerely believe most students do not commit ethical violations. We do not believe, however, the violations we have illuminated are limited to just the six speakers in our study—the chances are remote only the six finalists engaged in such practices.

We understand in certain circumstances how an inadvertent violation may occur. The most common reasons are memory/delivery "glitches" in the speech. A student may, under performance pressure, cite a source different than the prepared text. We believe an incorrect source/date is potentially the least severe of ethical violations. We should remember, however, the six students in the final round were not average speakers. The six students more than likely presented their speeches hundreds of times in practice and competition—including numerous final rounds. The six final-round speakers should have been well prepared for the pressure of a national final round. The rationale of a memory/delivery glitch does not, however, cover the full range of violations uncovered.

Some persons will lay the blame for the ethical violations on the students' coaches. We disagree with such an assessment. The primary responsibility for the evidence used in a public

address event lies mainly with the student. The coach is responsible for *teaching* students the appropriate use of sources and evidence; the student is responsible for how they employ those teachings. We believe each student speaker has primary responsibility for any evidence used in a speech. Our perspective is in agreement with other forensic scholars. According to Friedley (1983), the members of the Sedalia Conference stated, "ethical evidence usage [i]s the responsibility of the individual competitor in contest speaking" (p. 111).

We believe, however, partial blame for the current state of affairs also lies with the forensic judges and the internet. Both have the potential to misguide students as they prepare and compete in public address events. We place a portion of the blame on judges who listen to public address events throughout the competitive season. We concur with VerLinden (1996) who argues conventions in forensics are not always based on a sound pedagogical/theoretical foundation. The conventions are too often predicated on perceived reasons for success in others' performances and/or adjusting to the whims of judges' preferences.[7] We believe many judges have either inordinate expectations and/or do not actually evaluate the evidence presented in the speeches.

The issue of "counting sources" has been noted in the activity for awhile. Many judges place "hashmarks" at the top of the ballot indicating the number of sources used by the students along with comments such as "need more sources" or "good number of sources." Neither judging comment indicates the quality of the sources employed. Williams (1997) determined an average of 14.8 sources were cited in informative and persuasive speaking at the 1996 American Forensic Association—National Individual Events Tournament. The net result—A source was cited every 39.6 seconds. Our study found an average of 13.3 evidence cites per speech (e.g., a

cite every 45 seconds). One student in our study cited a source on average every 35.3 seconds (17 evidence cites). Williams correctly points out few if any other public speaking forums would find speeches so inundated with source citations. Williams contends too many judges are only concerned with "how many sources are used in the speech?" (p. 107).

We believe "simple and easy criteria" is one reason judges count the number of sources. Counting sources is "simple and easy" to do and requires little cognitive involvement in the actual quality of the evidence/source the student cites. Counting sources is a "simple and easy" standard for a judge to use in rendering a decision.

Based on his findings, Williams (1997) argues competitors and judges have become pre-occupied with the quantity, rather than the quality, of sources in public address events. For example, the speech on Artificial Muscles cited the journal *Pacific Affairs*, which addresses geo-political issues relevant to the Pacific Rim region of the world. An astute judge evaluating the sources would question the validity of the citation.[8] Students under the intense pressure to please such judges may wander toward unethical behavior.

Second, the internet now provides competitors with a plethora of potential sources for their speeches. Electronic databases provide evidence from journal/magazine/newspaper articles across the world. Students are now expected to access and include in their presentations the full range of sources at their disposal. We believe the internet has compounded the problem of excessive source citations in public address events. Forensics cannot limit offerings or access to the internet, but forensics can request judges to curb the demands they make on the quantity of sources used by students.

A critical issue confronting forensics is how to prevent such occurrences in the future. We offer the following recommendations:

Directors should reinforce and explicitly teach the AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities (1982/1998). We suggest posting the code in a highly visible area for all competitors to see. Directors should explicitly discuss the appropriate use of sources and evidence with their students. Directors can become more involved in the process by challenging judges who write non-educational comments on ballots (e.g., "need more sources"). A director can send a simple e-mail to a judge asking them to explain ballot comments and how the comments serve a sound theoretical/pedagogical purpose.

Students should know, understand, and follow the AFA code (1982/1998)—and realize the standard to which they are held. We recommend students maintain a hard copy of all sources they used in constructing their presenations (including the sources not actually cited in the speech). The

Judges should, first, base their comments and decisions on sound theoretical and pedagogical standards within the discipline. For example, the "counting sources" standard is not supported by the discipline. We conducted a quick review of a number of public speaking textbooks and did not find a single reference indicating the *quantity* of evidence to include in a public address; yet all the public speaking textbooks discussed the importance of *quality* of the evidence/source. Second, judges should know and follow the Sedalia resolutions mentioned earlier. We

repeat the resolutions here due to the critical role they play in adjudicating forensic competition:

- Forensics should promote adherence to the ethical and scholarly obligation of the advocate, including respect for the integrity of evidence, accurate representation of the ideas of others, and rigorous examination of beliefs. (Friedley, 1983, p. 111)
- Evidence should be evaluated not by its quantity, but by its quality determined in part by its credibility and audience acceptability. Thoroughness and care must be exercised in finding, recording, and documenting evidence. Advocates should recognize their ultimate responsibility for all evidence they use, whether discovered by them or by others. (Friedley, 1983, p. 111)

The viability of forensics as a co-curricular activity is dependent on the implementation of sound ethical standards. All individuals involved in the activity have an obligation to ethical standards to ensure its endurance.

ENDNOTES

[1] The "laboratory" metaphor is not new in intercollegiate forensics. Numerous scholars have expounded on its merits and limitations, including. See, for example, McBath (1975), Thomas (1980), Bartanen (1981), Kay (1984), McBath (1984), Harris (1989), Harris, Kropp, and Rosenthal (1989), and Aden (1991).

[2] The 1998 revision to the AFA code does not impact the analytical framework for our study. The 1998 amendment is related to the use, citation standards, and availability of electronically gathered evidence. According to James W. Pratt, executive secretary of AFA, in an e-mail discussion of November 22, 2000, "the 1998 change was actually the result of a motion at the November 19, 1997, business meeting ... 'Educational Development and Practices, Star Muir, Chair, George Mason University. ... He ... presented a proposal to establish evidentiary standards for electronic research. The motion recommends that evidence be generally accessible to all members of the community and provides specific recommendations for source citations standards. ... Motion approved by a voice vote.'" The motion added II-1-C (6) to the code. The text of II-1-C (6) is included in the text of the article in the Review of Literature section under the sub-heading: AFA Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities.

[3] We are indebted to the following students from Minnesota State University, Mankato for the research efforts on behalf of this project: Katie Beam, Andrea Beloy, Erin Bertie, Gretchen Block, Troy Davis, Jenn Dettmann, Lisa Frische, Lotty Grathwohl, Jason Harber, Karen Heater, Jared Hendrickson, Don Hess, Rachel Kutzke, Patrick MacIntyre, Idanis Martiin,

Elsa Mebrahtu, Brian Mullin, Ellen Nelson, Diana Olsem, Sara Omdahl, Jen Parsley, Amy Jo Phillips, Aaron Thomas, Mariah Van de Wiele, Rose Vavra, Emily Waterston, and Nick Wzorek.

[4] We counted each time a student referenced a source as a piece of evidence. Students would, on occasion, reference the same source more than once using the time-honored statement, "according to the previously cited ...."

[5] We did not time the speeches to the exact second. Our computations are based, rather, on the 10-minute time limit for the event. We assume the percents would be the same or higher if the exact-second times for each speech were determined (since each speech should be 10-minutes or shorter).

[6] One student, for example, cited the Conference of Automation and Robotics, April 19, 1997. We were unable to find the source. We did, however, find a reference to the Conference on Robotics and Automation (not Automation and Robotics). The conference was held April 20-25, 1997, not April 19, 1997. The student obviously transposed "automation" and "robotics" and misspoke the date by one day.

[7] Cronn-Mills and Golden (1997) address the evolutionary process for the creation of unwritten rules (such as source counting) in forensics:

> **The Evolution of an Unwritten Rule: A Twelve-Step Program**
>
> Unwritten rules do not just spring forth fully formed from pen of a forensic judge. Rules have a genesis inherent within the forensic practices in which we engage. The twelve steps articulated below describe the basis for the generation, perpetuation, and discontinuation of unwritten rules.
>
> 1. A talented student tries something new/different;

2. talented student is rewarded by judge for a strong performance (judge may not even have liked the new approach, yet votes for student because overall performance was strong);
3. student continues to win at a variety of tournaments;
4. other students observe the winning student and attribute success to the new/different approach;
5. other students adapt the new approach into their performances;
6. judges see "everyone" doing the new approach and assume this is how it is supposed to be done;
7. judges start expecting everyone to include the new approach;
8. judges start penalizing students who fail to include the new approach;
9. students believe they must include the new approach to be competitive;
10. seniors graduate;
11. forensic alumni return (as either graduate coaches or hired judges) the next season and employ the "unwritten rules" they learned as competitors in order to render decisions;
12. the unwritten rule is perpetuated by the community until we return to Step One when a talented student tries something new/different. (Online)

[8] We did not have access to the student's ballots and are unaware if any of the judges actually questioned the date of the source.

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